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## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims as follows:

- 1-78. (CANCELED)
- 79. (NEW) A purified nucleic acid molecule comprising:
- (A) a molecule that hybridizes to either strand of a denatured, double-stranded DNA comprising the nucleic acid molecule of SEQ ID NO: 7 under conditions of moderate stringency and that encodes an amino acid racemase activity;
- (B) a molecule that is derived by *in vitro* mutagenesis from SEQ ID NO: 7 and encodes an amino acid racemase activity; and/or
- (C) a molecule that is degenerate from SEQ ID NO: 7 as a result of the genetic code and that encodes an amino acid racemase activity.
- 80. (NEW) A recombinant vector that directs the expression of a nucleic acid molecule as claimed in claim 79.
- 81. (NEW) A host cell transfected or transduced with the vector as claimed in claim 80.
  - 82. (NEW) A kit for detecting a parasite, said kit comprising:

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- (A) a polynucleotide probe, which hybridizes with the nucleic acid as claimed in claim 79 under moderate stringency; and
  - (B) reagents to perform a nucleic acid hybridization reaction.

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